

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 719

**Introduced by Assembly Member Bonnie Lowenthal
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Ammiano, Beall, Hall,
John A. Perez, Portantino, Skinner, and Torres)**

February 26, 2009

An act to add Section 18901.4 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to public social services.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 719, as amended, Bonnie Lowenthal. Transitional food stamps for foster youth.

Existing law declares the duty of the state to care for and protect the children that it places into foster care. Under existing law, the State Department of Social Services has various powers and duties relating to ensuring that the needs of foster children are met.

Existing law requires the State Department of Health Care Services, if, and to the extent that, all necessary federal approvals are obtained for federal financial participation, to implement a federal option to extend Medi-Cal benefits to independent foster care adolescents, as defined in federal law.

Existing law provides for the federal *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)* (formerly the *Food Stamp Program*, *Program*), under which each county distributes food stamps provided by the federal government nutrition assistance benefits to eligible households. The *Food Stamp Program SNAP* is administered at the state level by the State Department of Social Services.

This bill would require the department to ~~create the~~ *propose a Transitional Food Stamps for Foster Youth Program demonstration project*, effective July 1, 2010. The ~~program demonstration project~~ would provide independent foster care adolescents, who are not eligible for CalWORKs or SSI benefits, with eligibility for food stamps without regard to income or resources.

This bill would require the department to implement its provisions by ~~all-county all-county~~ letter or similar instructions, and would prescribe additional duties of the department in connection with the transitional food stamp ~~program demonstration project~~, *including obtaining necessary federal approvals*. This bill would be implemented only to the extent that federal financial participation is available.

By increasing county duties, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 *SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the*
- 2 *following:*
- 3 *(a) Foster youth who emancipate from foster care face a*
- 4 *disproportionately higher rate of unemployment. Fifty-one percent*
- 5 *of emancipated foster youth are unemployed within two to four*
- 6 *years of emancipation.*
- 7 *(b) Fewer than four in 10 foster youth had at least two hundred*
- 8 *fifty dollars (\$250) in cash upon emancipating.*
- 9 *(c) Forty-six percent of emancipated foster youth have not*
- 10 *completed high school.*
- 11 *(d) Sixty-five percent of foster youth emancipate without a place*
- 12 *to live.*
- 13 *(e) Forty percent of persons living in homeless shelters are*
- 14 *former foster youth.*

1 (f) Nearly 50 percent of emancipated foster youth suffer from
2 chronic health conditions such as asthma, visual and auditory
3 problems, dental decay, and malnutrition.

4 (g) Competing priorities for limited economic and social
5 resources force emancipated foster youth who cannot meet their
6 basic needs to prioritize their needs for food, housing, and health
7 care.

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 SEC. 2. Section 18901.4 is added to the Welfare and Institutions
10 Code, to read:

11 18901.4. (a) Effective July 1, 2010, the department shall ~~create~~
12 ~~propose~~ a Transitional Food Stamps for Foster Youth ~~program~~
13 ~~demonstration project~~ under which independent foster care
14 adolescents, as defined in Section 1905(w)(1) of the federal Social
15 Security Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 1396d(w)(1)) ~~and~~ who are not eligible
16 for ~~CalWORKs~~ CalWORKs or Supplementary Security Income
17 program benefits, shall be eligible without regard to income or
18 resources, *subject to federal law authorizing demonstration projects*
19 *pursuant to Section 2011 and following of Title 7 of the United*
20 *States Code.*

21 (b) An individual eligible for the program ~~created~~ *proposed*
22 pursuant to this section shall receive the maximum benefit amount
23 allotted for a household size of one for the initial certification
24 period, which shall remain constant for the entirety of the initial
25 certification period. The food stamp case shall be established and
26 maintained in the county of jurisdiction designated by the
27 terminating foster care case.

28 ~~(e) An individual eligible pursuant to this section shall be~~
29 ~~entitled to a 12-month certification period and shall be exempt~~
30 ~~from any quarterly or semiannual reporting requirement during~~
31 ~~the certification period.~~

32 (c) *The demonstration project proposed pursuant to this section*
33 *shall maximize access to benefits and minimize interim reporting*
34 *requirements during the certification period.*

35 (d) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, Chapter 4.6
36 (commencing with Section 10830) of Part 2 of Division 9 shall
37 not apply to individuals eligible under this section during the
38 12-month transitional food stamp ~~program~~ *demonstration project*
39 certification period.

1 (e) Not later than March 1, 2010, the department shall seek all
2 necessary federal ~~waivers~~ *approvals* to implement this section *as*
3 *a demonstration project* for these beneficiaries. This section shall
4 be implemented only to the extent that federal financial
5 participation is available.

6 (f) The department shall implement this section by an ~~all-county~~
7 *all-county* letter (ACL) or similar instruction from the director and
8 shall adopt regulations as otherwise necessary to implement this
9 section no later than January 1, 2011.

10 ~~(g) The department shall establish a new aid code for individuals~~
11 ~~receiving benefits pursuant to this section, in order to differentiate~~
12 ~~these cases from the standard Non-assistance Food Stamp (NAFS)~~
13 ~~case.~~

14 ~~SEC. 2.~~

15 *SEC. 3.* If the Commission on State Mandates determines that
16 this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to
17 local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made
18 pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division
19 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.